

How to find a good used combine

LANCASTER — Good working combines are not hard to find if you know where and what to look for. Prices range from \$400 and up, depending on size, features, age and condition. They are complex machines, so it pays to check every section for proper function.

The different operations that combines perform are: a) cutting, b) conveying, c) threshing, d) separating, e) cleaning, f) grain filling/unloading. Study these operations on a used

combine before you decide to buy that machine.

What is the right machine for your farm?

That depends on the crop, number of acres, size of fields, availability of custom work, and timeliness. Probably the most certain characteristic is that the combine will be an old, used one, purchased in a cash-grain farming area.

Your best bet locally is Central New York, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey.

Many of the mid-Atlantic

vegetable farms have switched to shelled corn, soybeans, barley and oats - due to rising costs of farm labor versus the capacity and economics of a mechanized harvest.

Here is a checklist to use during the initial inquiries for a combine:

1. Self propelled. In general, these combines are easier to transport, resell, control, and are more comfortable for the operator. They are more expensive than pull-behind PTO units.

2. Large bin capacity. Grain tanks range from 18 to 60 bushels or more. The harvest will run more smoothly with fewer stops to unload.

3. Good tires. Keep a spare with you if you are towing a combine home.

4. Little or no rust. Older combines are covered with sheet metal. These pieces are difficult to fabricate, and there are few spares. Check

the sheet metal in contact with conveyors, chains, fine sieves, and the threshing cylinder.

5. Cylinder bars and concaves not bent (from rocks picked up at the cutter bar). These bars are often covered with rubber, and are expensive to replace.

6. Header floats freely — Once in a while an operator will catch a corner or gate post and spring the header unit out of alignment. This is hard to see without moving the affected parts.

7. Check grease fittings for adequate lubrication. The old Allis Chalmers "66" combine (1950s vintage; had 80 fittings to be greased).

8. Safety shields should be intact.

9. If a spare head (for corn, small grain, pick-up-reel or one for windrowed crops) is included but is off the machine, you'll want to know if it works on the machine.

10. Are sheaves bent,

distorted? Many an operator has forced a belt off a sheave (pulley) with screwdriver or a steel bar. Repairs with this kind of work come back to haunt you.

When you are making the last visit to pick up a combine, take along a hand held tachometer to check the speed of the cylinder, separator drive shaft, and conveying drives. At a certain engine (or pto) speed, these parts should turn at a specific number of revolutions per minute. Don't forget a watch.

Bring spare tires, slow moving vehicles (SMV) sign, safety chains, and tie-downs. The advantages of a self propelled combine (with or without a cab) will be apparent when loading onto a truck or low-boy trailer. Check the route home for low

bridges or narrow tollbooths.

It is easy to find a good 12 foot, self propelled combine for a few thousand dollars. Some of the best places to look would be mid-to-late summer issues of:

The Hunterdon County Democrat (weekly newspaper, used by farmers), Flemington, New Jersey;

Lancaster Farming (over 120 used combines for sale in a September, 1980 issue) Box 366, Lititz, PA 17543 (\$7.50/yr., weekly);

Consignment Auction, 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of the month, Archbold, Ohio, to name a few. Plus, central New York papers, the New England Farmer and farmers' exchange bulletins from Vermont and New Hampshire Departments of Agriculture.

Members service meeting held

HERSHEY — The annual meeting of the Members' Service Corp. of the Pennsylvania Farmers' Association will take place Monday during the 30th Annual Meeting of PFA.

Several hundred farmers' association leaders including voting delegates from 54 county units will gather at the Hershey Motor Lodge and Convention Center, November 23 to 26, to adopt policy, elect leaders and attend special events.

PFA's Member Service Corp. is a wholly owned corporation of the voluntary, general farm organization. It offers business services to members in farm supplies, insurance, accounting and other areas.

The corporation's Farm Management and Business Analysis Service prepares farm tax returns for more than 3800 family farms. In addition to tax preparation,

this service offers business analysis, management advice and tax planning.

Another division of the Members' Service Corp., the Insurance Service, fields 39 agents. Their total premiums in force for life, property and casualty coverage exceeds \$6.7 million.

The Group Purchasing Division offers members low prices on Safemark tires, batteries, plow parts and other farm supplies through county group purchasing coordinators and over 130 authorized dealers across the state. Sales volume during the past year totaled over \$19 million.

Financial reports are also being presented for the Retail Farm Market Division which offers consumer products through local outlets and certifies quality farmer-operated markets.

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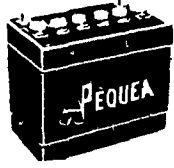
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